



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jason Rueter or Jason.Rueter@noaa.gov
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

January 19, 2006

FB06-002

GAG, RED GROUPER, AND BLACK GROUPER COMMERCIAL FISHERIES IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL CLOSE FEBRUARY 15 UNTIL MARCH 15, 2006

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the prohibition on the sale or purchase of gag, red grouper, or black grouper harvested from the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone (EEZ) from February 15 until March 15, 2006. No person aboard a vessel for which a valid federal commercial Gulf reef fish permit has been issued may possess these species in the EEZ regardless of where harvested. The operator of a vessel with a valid federal commercial Gulf reef fish permit having gag, red grouper, or black grouper aboard must have landed and sold said fish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 15, 2006. This prohibition on sale/purchase does not apply to gag, red grouper, or black grouper harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to February 15 and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. Additionally, during the closure, the recreational bag and possession limits of gag, red grouper, and black grouper aboard those vessels which have been issued a valid federal commercial Gulf reef fish permit is zero.

A person aboard a vessel for which the federal permit indicates both charter vessel/headboat for Gulf reef fish and commercial Gulf reef fish may continue to retain gag, red grouper, and black grouper under the recreational bag and possession limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Reef fish caught under the recreational bag limit may not be

sold. The commercial fishery will reopen at 12:01 a.m. on March 15, 2006.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes. This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
PERMIT NO. G-19

National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office, F/SER25
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
Official Business
Penalty for Private Use - \$ 300
FB06-002